

**Mayor's Committee on Integrity and Trust
in Local Government**

**Town Hall Meeting
Our Lady of the Lake University
At the Sueltenfus Library Community Room
January 8, 2003 7:00 P.M.**

Committee Members Presiding:

Dr. Tessa Martinez Pollack (Chair); Lila Cockrell; Dr. Morris Stribling; Dr. Richard Gambitta; General William V. McBride, U.S.A.F. (Ret); Deanna Frisk; and Andrew Martin, City Attorney.

Meeting Convened:

On January 8, 2003 at 7:00 P.M., Dr. Tessa Martinez Pollack convened the Town Hall Meeting of the Mayor's Committee on Integrity and Trust in Local Government at Our Lady of the Lake University at the Sueltenfus Library Community Room. Dr. Pollack gave opening comments to the assembly, explaining the work of the Committee and the procedures for the meeting.

Dr. Pollack introduced the members of the Committee present. She further explained that the Committee had divided itself into four research teams made up of the following members:

The Ethics Code Review Subcommittee: Members are General William McBride, Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Zureck and Dianne Cortez.

The Discretionary Contracts and Zoning Subcommittee: Members are Dr. Tessa Martinez Pollack, former Councilman Bob Ross, Carlos Montemayor and Deanna Frisk.

The Campaign Finance Subcommittee: Members are Dr. Charles Cotrell, Dr. Richard Gambitta, Dr. Morris Stribling and Wayne Alexander.

The Character Education Subcommittee: Members are Dr. Ana "Cha" Guzman, Rev. Kenneth Allen and Rev. Charles Johnson.

Speakers:

1) Robert Danesi : Mr. Danesi stated that his work is in psychiatry and went on to say to short-circuit the process, politics needs to be transparent. Taxpayers get screwed when money is involved and time after time, contract after contract the City is out-manned. After the fact, the City states that they did not know that the contract stated certain clauses. Mr. Danesi also stated that City staff often arrives for a fight unarmed, meaning they attend meetings unprepared. Mr. Danesi also mentioned that what he

saw with the PGA Project was disgraceful and the City is in need of a truly binding referendum.

Dr. Pollack stated that speakers would be called in the order that they had signed up on the sign up sheets and that each speaker would be limited to five (5) minutes. She noted that the Committee would not be able to address or resolve individual complaints or grievances with the City or City personnel.

Dr. Pollack stated that after the four public meetings, the Committee would begin its work on its report to Mayor Edward D. Garza setting out its recommendations by January 31, 2003.

2) Fanny Mayahuel-Thomas: Ms. Mayahuel-Thomas started by thanking the Committee members for doing a great job of putting this all together. Ms. Mayahuel-Thomas stated that she ran for Mayor two (2) years ago and obviously did not win that election however, it did give her the opportunity to see everything that goes on under the table. Ms. Mayahuel-Thomas said that some of us want to make a change. She went on to say that she brought her son here today as tired and sleepy as he was because she believes that it is important to voice her opinion here today. Ms. Mayahuel-Thomas stated City Council should be paid a salary and currently Council is not prepared. Maybe twice a week would be better to meet for Council. Ms. Mayahuel-Thomas closed by saying the City needs to follow a clean money campaign, limit office term limits, limit money contributions and we need a more tight knit ship. Thank you very much.

3) Kenny Wilson: Mr. Wilson introduced himself as working for the Bank of America and a representative of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce representing a mass of 2300 members composed of small business'. Mr. Wilson thanked the Committee members for their time spent on the Committee and for the preparation of the Public Hearing. Mr. Wilson handed a written statement from the Chamber to the Committee members. This document is attached hereto as **Attachment 2**. Mr. Wilson stated that he knows good people need to run, but who would want the headache. He would like to see small business' to be treated fairly and be able to compete for contracts. He stated that reasonable limits are in order and full disclosure is in order. Mr. Wilson believes that extending term limits is important and is in favor of eliminating the lifetime ban. Mr. Wilson thanked the committee in appreciation for their help.

4) Jack M. Finger: Mr. Finger stated that he had talked with a few of the Committee members last night at a Public Hearing he attended. He wanted to touch on a few comments he had spoke of the night before. Mr. Finger said that he believes decisions are being made on short time limits and that if more time is needed to make a better judgement than it should be asked for from the Mayor. Mr. Finger said that if no time would be granted than that would be someone that might be trying to stop you and is trying to get something passed you. Mr. Finger stated when you start stopping money from campaign it would come from elsewhere. The media helps get messages to the public. If campaign contributions stopped, than the media would bring up information they think should be addressed. Mr. Finger went on to say that term limits should not be tampered with because it stops careerism. Mr. Finger stated that corruption at City Hall needed to be stopped.

5) John Cavazos: Mr. Cavazos started by handing out an ethics proposal to the Committee members. This document is attached hereto as **Attachment 3**. Mr. Cavazos stated that he would like to take this opportunity to read a comment and also being a City Commissioner he would like to get to the meat and bone. This being his first time speaking would like to recommend three (3) things: 1) Change the City Charter - from a Council/Mayor system to a Mayoral/Council system. Currently we do not have a Mayor that can make decisions. Mr. Cavazos states that the Mayor should be paid \$100,000 plus and that City Council should be paid \$50,000 plus benefits. There should be a campaign contributions cap, \$5,000 for the Mayor and \$1,000 for the City Council Members with full disclosure of contributions possibly on the City web page. Mr. Cavazos went on to mention the salaries for the Mayor and City Council for Houston, Los Angeles and the City of Phoenix (all listed on his hand out).

6) Nick Calzoncit: Mr. Calzoncit started with best wishes to the Committee members for their effort on a serious problem. Mr. Calzoncit went on to say that San Antonio has the worst numbers for tobacco use nationwide. Mr. Calzoncit mentioned that the Surgeon General did two (2) reports on the areas where ethics are related. There are thousands of illegal signs all in minority neighborhoods and not one sign would be found in Alamo Heights. Mr. Calzoncit stated that City Council receives huge donations from the tobacco Companies and it is a huge problem. Mr. Calzoncit believes that there should be a code for City staff with the City Manager responsible. Mr. Calzoncit closed by saying that he has met and spoken with some members of the City Council where his own City Councilmember would not even meet with him to discuss the above issues even after calling his office 6 times. Mr. Calzoncit left a written statement with the Committee members. This document is attached hereto as **Attachment 4**.

Written statement: (My time ran out) The upcoming proposed San Antonio City Ordinance on smoking control is inadequate. It is certainly favored by the tobacco industry over one that addresses the needs of minorities and females. There is a need for a comprehensive Tobacco Control which focuses on minorities and females. (I presented this plan to Mayor Garza privately in his office.) It should include a plank which declares smoking near a child care abuse if the child can be shown medically to have been damaged. Such is happening in many U.S. Cities and States. Nick Calzoncit, 66 Brees #114, San Antonio, Tex. 78209, (210) 822-5582, ncalzoncit@hotmail.com.

7) Richard Alvarado: Mr. Alvarado started by letting the Committee members know what a pleasure it was to present to them. Mr. Alvarado stated there should be more consultation for more Public Forums and not just for action issues. Mr. Alvarado went on to say he believes he speaks for most citizens when he says when he votes for a City Councilperson he expects them to act with integrity and expects them to make decisions and avoid any action illegal and imprudent. Mr. Alvarado stated that the City Ethics Code is too complicated and that the lobbyist and attorneys are always looking for loopholes. Mr. Alvarado believes each City Council Member should perform 1st task of creating a Code of Ethics for itself under the direction of a separate facilitator. He believes that the Ethics Code for City Council should be brief and straightforward.

Mr. Rudy Casias mentioned that he was passed up on the sign up sheet to speak. Dr. Pollack said she was very sorry and if okay, he would be next after Joe Perez.

8) Joe Perez: Mr. Perez started by saying that there is corruption in the City. He mentioned that he was thrown in jail for no reason and has pleaded not guilty. Mr. Perez states that there is no justice and it starts at 215 San Saba Street. He states that there should be no excuse in not being successful in starting a business.

9) Rudy Casias: Mr. Casias stated that it has been a fiasco after the PGA and the reason being is that City Council and the Mayor continue to do things against the people's will. The people elected have no integrity and the way to eliminate the problem is for the City/State to pay for the campaign. Lobbyists need to be kept away from the City Council, that is our City Council. Mr. Casias states that City Council should not give out contracts. Mr. Casias believes that the elimination of Lobbyist in City Hall is necessary. Mr. Casias ends by saying that Toyota will be good for the City.

10) John Tolleson: Mr. Tolleson started by saying he appreciates everyone for speaking and that the last time he spoke was for the stadium issue. Mr. Tolleson stated that it was good to see Mayor Cockrell and he appreciates her work. He said that his mother has been gone for eight (8) years now and he was hoping that he would not do anything bad or he might be struck by lightening here tonight. Mr. Tolleson stated that there is a saying "Liberty for everyone" but now it seems it should be "Liberty for Profit". Mr. Tolleson said that the problem with the City is that over the years we have been run over by growth and we are obsessed by development, big is good but is not always better. An issue brought up by the PGA was the pollution of the water but the pollution of the people. Mr. Tolleson stated that the foxes have taken over the chicken coop and City Council works for chicken feed.

Dr. Pollack informed the people standing in the back of the room that there are vacant seats available in the front if they would like to take a seat.

11) John R. Torres: Mr. Torres started by saying we are dealing with human element. The only solution is to put those guys in jail. But they will not go to jail because you are all in the same bag and nothing has changed. You can talk about all this but we live in a time of greed and self-interest and materials things. Mr. Torres goes on to say that he gives a lot of his time and he has heard just about everything. He says that he will be honest in saying that he is not a genius or a very wise man but those men need to go to jail.

Dr. Pollack calls for Richard Alles to speak. It is mentioned that Mr. Alles has left. He left a statement, which is **Attachment 7**.

12) Dolores Zamarron: Ms. Zamarron states that she spoke at the Public Hearing held at St Philips and goes on to say that she is a single parent of six (6) from 30 years of age to 22 years. She has 3 children in the military and that her second oldest is disabled. She goes on to say that all of her children have graduated from Memorial High School. Ms. Zamarron states that this starts when you are little, to teach them well. She says that there are not only problems in City Council. Ms Zamarron goes on to say that the person not living out of his district should not have been fined and that prayer should be placed back in school. Ms Zamarron closed by saying that yesterday's Public Hearing was started in prayer and that our children should be allowed to do that also.

13) Tim McCallum: Mr. Callum starts by thanking the Commission but goes on to say that the Commission cannot change what is going on. He said it is the actions of the City Council that can bring back trust. Mr. Callum states that the City must hold all City Councilmembers accountable.

14) Mike Phillips: Mr. Phillips starts off by saying he believes there should be increased transparency and ongoing Public Hearings. He said that the City Council is an amateur hour and that nothing is going to change the corruption within City Hall. Mr. Phillips closes by saying that the recommendation of the Committee should be to get rid of term limits and that would restore integrity.

15) Daniel Hernandez: Mr. Hernandez started by thanking the Committee for the privilege of speaking and goes on to say that he is here as a concerned parent and for his passion for the City, he states that he loves San Antonio. Mr. Hernandez states that the goal is to identify the procedures that increase public trust and not just City Government, he said that this is a public problem and we should expand social accountability. Mr. Hernandez states three (3) basic recommendations: 1) create City practice web-site to keep San Antonio citizens informed, 2) on going Public Hearing Forums, 3) create a mandatory ethics protocol. Mr. Hernandez closes by saying "how you use your knowledge is more important than what you know".

16) Elginio Rodriguez: Mr. Rodriguez recommends that the Commission seek out the minutes from the November 7, 2002 meeting. Mr. Rodriguez states that the minutes can be retrieved from the U.S. District Clerk's Office and that the Commission should look over the document because the happenings might have been legal but questions if they were ethical. Not all information was documented but Mr. Rodriguez mentioned the name Gilbert Rodriguez.

17) Vera Billingsley: Ms. Billingsley started by saying that it is a blessing to be heard. She states that her husband worked for UHS and when fluoride came out Ed Garza was a City Councilmember for District 7 at the time. She mentions that orange booklets were handed out in the Northside School District children with pro-fluoride issues. She says that the point was to get the information out to the public. Ms. Billingsley recommends that the commission take a look at the book to see if the citizens were duped.

18) Gordon Hill: Mr. Hill starts by thanking the Commission for the opportunity to be heard. Mr. Hill states that he is here to praise Caesar and not to bury him and goes on to say that New York had the same problem that we are having. Mr. Hill states that there is a problem with ethics and problems with two (2) City Councilmen and that there is still a right of re-call available to the citizens. Mr. Hill recommends that we never get rid of private meetings.

Dr. Pollack called for Talia Nye-Keif to speak. Talia Nye-Keif was not present to speak.

19) Joe Karin: Mr. Karin starts by saying he has the utmost respect for the members at the table. Mr. Karin goes on to say that she believes everybody on the present administration is going to go to jail and if only two (2) go to jail then he hopes

that the rest get investigated. Mr. Karin states that the Mayor has put a lot of effort into the PGA and that some others are pulling things that are corrupt. Mr. Karin also said the Mayor is trying to get us to think it started with the Aquifer issue but recommended that we listen to the 107,000 citizens that want to vote and he listened to fifteen (15) people.

Dr. Pollack called for James O. Matthews to speak. It was mentioned that he had left and left a written statement for the Committee. The document is attached hereto as **Attachment 5**.

20) Jorge Pina: Mr. Pina started by thanking the Committee for serving and went on to say that he remembered as a little boy going to a quincinera (a birthday party for a 15 year old girl) on the top of La Gloria. He stated that last year that same building was destroyed, history was destroyed, the Chicano culture was destroyed and that it should be looked at to why it was destroyed. Mr. Pina states that too many buildings on the West Side are being destroyed. Mr. Pina recommends to write a report on that and to look into how zoning folks are appointed. Mr. Pina states that people should vote on whom will serve. Mr. Pina goes on to say that term limits do not work and that the people should vote Councilmembers in and out of office. He also says that City staff should write a report on how City staff is compensated. Mr. Pina ends by thanking the Committee once more.

21) Theresa Berlanga: Ms. Berlanga starts by saying that she attended the Public Hearing held the night before at the Witte Museum. Ms. Berlanga states that this is not enough time to tell you how the people feel about the last 25 years. Ms. Berlanga also states that having an attorney, as a Councilmember is a conflict of interest but that she can not go into that because there is not enough time.

22) Mike Lyons: Mr. Lyons is not from San Antonio but moved here from the N.E. because the pollution was so bad and he could not raise his children there. Mr. Lyons states that the City is growing faster than we can perceive. Mr. Lyons goes on to say that everything is not connected and when one thing is done it is not looked at to see what the effects will be down the line.

23) Luis Elizondo: Mr. Elizondo begins by saying that he resides in an Inner City Neighborhood in District 1 and extends his gratitude to the Commission and to the people who attended tonight. Mr. Elizondo stated that he has been personally involved in a Zoning situation in his neighborhood that was ultimately turned down by Zoning and then overturned by City Council. This Zoning decision not only affected him but also the neighborhood for the negative. Mr. Elizondo states that contribution acceptance should have a deadline and a cap of \$15,000. Mr. Elizondo goes on to say that he believes the City should do away with term limits and have strict penalties to those City Councilmembers who trade votes. Mr. Elizondo ends by saying that it would be good for the City to create a term limit of 30 days for the Zoning Commission. Mr. Elizondo left a written statement for the Commission. This document is attached hereto as **Attachment 6**.

24) A. R. Velasquez: Mr. Velasquez is a member of the San Antonio Craftsman Association that consists of blue collar-small business folks. Mr. Velasquez extends his thanks to the committee and goes on to say that the Committee has heard from the

heart of San Antonian's and when the people are not listened to, it affects hope. If there is no hope than people stop voting. Mr. Velasquez states it is important to fix the problem at hand. Mr. Velasquez recommends that the City and the Commission look at Contracting, build with standards and not minimize standards, not minimize buildings. He goes on to say that the Committee should look at what kinds of contracts are going to affect the community, please look at the process. Mr. Velasquez closes by stating a pre-Chicano saying, "of the best things corrupted become the worse".

25) J. George Cisneros: Mr. Cisneros starts by saying how the Commission addresses the seriousness of the approaching task will show how the community approaches you. Mr. Cisneros thanks the Commission for not once receiving a phone call, not once making a phone call, not once turning their back to the people the way that City Councilmembers do. Mr. Cisneros asked is this the way City Councilmembers see the community. He goes on to say that these are perceptions viewed and not one of the City Councilmembers is a Medical Doctor as to need to receive an emergency call during a City Council session. Mr. Cisneros states he is a businessman having to deal with City departments and that some City departments run the City. He recommends that the Commission review the RFP process and how differently it can affect a small businessperson compared to big business.

26) Rusty Riley: Mr. Riley starts by saying that he has over 30 years in Business Finance and has made recommendations before but has not seen change made. Mr. Riley proposes to avoid temptation and create strict guidelines where standards are maintained. Mr. Riley states that he is impressed with the backgrounds of the Committee members. Mr. Riley left documents for the Committee. The document is attached hereto as **Attachment 7**.

27) Michael Carabetta: Mr. Carabetta begins by saying that he spoke last night at one of the Public Hearings. Mr. Carabetta goes on to say that he has lived adjacent to the PGA Village sight for the passed 8 years and that he can honestly say that he is the neighbor to Lumberman's. Mr. Carabetta states that he has approached City Council in reference to false information in Dawson's presentation where the citizens could not speak. Mr. Carabetta states that he was allowed low density and Lumberman's was allowed high density. Mr. Carabetta also states that he has heard no word in regards to the endangered species. Mr. Carabetta states that he can point out the lies of the presentation and shame on City Council for not wanting to hear what he had to say shame on the Mayor for not wanting to hear what he had to say. Mr. Carabetta closes by saying the citizens have a right to hear the truth.

28) Maxine Elizondo: Ms. Elizondo starts by saying she lives in an Inner City Neighborhood and she wanted to continue speaking where her husband ended off. Ms. Elizondo recommends that the Zoning Commission and its process are reviewed and for City Council to overturn a Commission decision it should be required to be done so by 100% of the quorum vote including the Mayor. Ms. Elizondo also recommends that City Councilmembers remain at City Council sessions and alert to what is going on in session. City Councilmembers should not receive or make cellular phone calls and the City and the public as to how it is being used should monitor the discretionary fund.

29) Fred A. Rangel: Mr. Rangel begins by thanking the Committee for staying late and gave his appreciation for the time and effort given to the issue tonight. Mr. Rangel stated that the citizens are mad and upset with the system. It might not be broken but they are upset and he believes that everything going on is a by-product of the early 60's where prayer and the Ten Commandments were kicked out. Mr. Rangel states that he favors changing term limits and that a better way to represent accountability should be created. Mr. Rangel goes on to say issues need to be heard and more venues should occur on a regular basis and not only when a major issue arises. Mr. Rangel states that the City is in a 44 million-dollar short fall, we are in a whole. The City should create a hot line and campaign reform with full disclosure to the community. Mr. Rangel closed by stating closed meetings are needed but some one should stand up and say, "you are fired" and "we do not need you" to the two (2) Councilmen.

Dr. Pollack extended her thanks to each of the citizens who attended and stated it was a pleasure to serve with the Commissioner's in attendance at the Hearing. Dr. Pollack went on to say that her colleagues would agree that there is no greater privilege then hearing from those who care the most about our City.

Adjourn 9:05 P.M.